CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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President: Mr. Naste Calovski (Yugoslavia)

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The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 612th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the very beginning, I wish to welcome to the Conference Representative H. Martin Lancaster of the Congress of the United States of America, who is present today at this plenary meeting. He has wide experience in the field of law, having held a number of important positions in that field. He has been a member of Congress since 1986 and is a member of several Committees of the House of Representatives, including the Committee on Armed Services. I wish him a successful visit to the Conference.

As I announced yesterday, the Conference shall take action today on a number of organizational matters. We shall adopt the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, which was circulated as document CD/1116. We shall also formalize agreement on the organizational arrangements to be followed for agenda items 2 and 3. We shall then proceed to consider a request from Malta to participate in the work of the Conference. I will also put before the Conference for decision a draft mandate on the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. In addition, I shall make some announcements regarding the appointment of special coordinators for agenda items on which no agreement has emerged regarding appropriate organizational arrangements.

I have on my list of speakers this morning the representatives of the Netherlands, France and Austria.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands, Ambassador Wagenmakers.

Mr. WAGENMAKERS (Netherlands): Mr. President, like you, I would like to welcome the presence in our midst this morning of Mr. Martin Lancaster, Member of the House of Representatives of the United States.

Mr. President, as of 1 January of this year the United Nations has established a Register of Conventional Arms. In early 1993 the first returns from United Nations Member States will be due for the calendar year 1992. An old aspiration of mankind, notably voiced in the League of Nations, has become reality. The General Assembly has requested the Conference on Disarmament to play its role in helping to get the Register up and running. The international community has entrusted no small responsibility to our Conference on Disarmament in the process of arms control and disarmament in the final decade of the twentieth century.

How did this important new fact come about? What does it mean for the Conference on Disarmament?

During the past few years political events have moved at breathtaking speed and have fundamentally altered the nature of global security concerns. The old East-West confrontation has withered away and the threat of global nuclear war has receded. At present, the world situation is in a state of flux and full of uncertainties which make it difficult for States to assess

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and provide for their legitimate security needs. A major stabilizing factor in this uncertain world is openness and transparency in matters related to military security. In the field of arms control and disarmament one could go as far as to say that transparency is one of the key concepts for the 90s: it could be described as a new code word for enhanced security for all.

Let there be no misunderstanding. States have the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against them. This right is universally recognized and enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. Arms transfers in accordance with this right are legitimate; no question about it. The Register is there to allow United Nations Member States to demonstrate that their procurement of arms serves no other goal than to provide a sufficiency for self-defence.

Accumulation of arms becomes an issue of concern to neighbouring States, to a region or to the world community as a whole, whenever the number and/or the quality of arms accumulated result in a threat to peace, security and stability. Many arms transfers are carried out in secrecy. Thus, the total amount of weapons acquired by one State may become generally known only too late. The absence of openness and transparency can lead to misperceptions and miscalculations. And thereby to a climate of tension.

States have a legitimate interest in relevant and factual information from neighbouring States about a type of transaction that directly concerns the vital issues of peace, security and stability in their region. Unilateral arms acquisitions may generate misperceptions. The ensuing regional destabilization may account for vast expenditures and divert resources from socio-economic purposes. In our interdependent world, matters like the one I refer to do not take long to assume a global dimension.

The example of the Gulf War and the invasion of Kuwait spring to mind: especially in areas of tension, no single country should strive for levels of armaments which no longer bear any relationship with its need for self-defence. Unfortunately, excessive armament is still the case in a number of regions, especially in the Middle East.

In this context reference should also be made to the particularly disturbing illicit arms trade. The Netherlands wholeheartedly supports all efforts to obviate that curse. However, given its clandestine nature, the illicit arms trade as such falls outside the scope of my statement today.

It is commonly recognized that the international community has a clear responsibility to deal with the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of conventional arms. The associated problems affect States, large and small, in all parts of the world. It is also commonly recognized that this question has multiple facets: transfers, production and holdings, and that these aspects are interrelated. Nor, if one is to deal with the problem in a comprehensive manner, can one ignore the relationship with the transfer of high technology having military applications and with weapons of mass destruction.

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Within the United Nations some important steps had already been taken earlier on by establishing a reporting system for military budgets. Furthermore, the United Nations Disarmament Commission is at work on the subject of objective information on military matters. Another dynamic element is constituted by the inspiring report of the Secretary-General entitled "Study on ways and means of promoting transparency in international transfers of conventional arms" (document A/46/301).

Now, with the setting up of a universal and non-discriminatory arms register, a new vista has opened up: the innovating development of a global confidence- and security-building measure without precedent. Properly implemented, this measure should enable United Nations Member States to plan their security requirements on the basis of better knowledge and significantly to reduce the possibility of misperceptions and misunderstandings.

No wonder that the General Assembly adopted the pertinent resolution (A/46/36L) with an overwhelming majority of 150 votes and not a single negative vote. The Register of Conventional Arms is built on two main pillars:

1. Data on the import and export of arms;

2. Available background information regarding military holdings, procurement through national production, and relevant policies.

With a view to avoiding that the Register remain a static entity, provision has been made to facilitate its early expansion. The Register is envisaged as an ever growing and flexible format which will comprise elements on holdings, procurements from national means, and other characteristics as the need arises. Member States have been invited to provide the Secretary-General with their views on the operation of the Register and its potential for expansion. They are also invited to take measures supportive of the Register. Reference is made to both national measures and regional or international efforts.

The political relevance of the Member States taking action in the way I have just described was underscored in the Presidential Statement which concluded the meeting of the Security Council at the level of Heads of State and Government of 31 January last. Allow me to quote the pertinent passage of that statement:

> "On conventional armaments, they (i.e. the members of the Security Council) note the General Assembly's vote in favour of a United Nations Register of Arms Transfers as a first step, and in this connection recognize the importance of all States providing all the information called for in the General Assembly's resolution".

Let me turn now to practicalities. As for machinery to get the Register started, the Secretary-General has appointed a panel of governmental technical experts. The panel's task is to elaborate the procedures by which the data and information supplied under the Register are to be collected, stored and made available to United Nations Member States. Secondly, the panel is

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supposed to make any adjustments to the Annex necessary for the effective operation of the Register. Thirdly, the panel is requested to prepare a report on the modalities for early expansion of the scope of the Register by the addition of further categories of equipment and the inclusion of data on military holdings and procurement through national production.

The panel has already started its work. Efforts will be made to keep the Register simple, logical, coherent and conducive to universal participation. Careful consideration will be given to the structure of the annual consolidated report of the Secretary-General to the Member States. Furthermore, due attention will be given to the accessibility of the Register with a view to facilitating easy consultation of the Register by representatives of Member States. The panel's results will be made available to the General Assembly at its next session.

Parallel to and in support of the panel's work, the Conference on Disarmament has been invited:

Firstly, to address, as soon as possible, the question of the interrelated aspects of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms, including military holdings and procurement through national production, and to elaborate universal and non-discriminatory practical means to increase openness and transparency in this field;

Secondly, the Conference on Disarmament has been invited to address the problems of, and the elaboration of practical means to increase, openness and transparency related to the transfer of high technology with military applications and to weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with existing legal instruments;

And, finally, our Conference is invited to include in its Annual Report a report on its work on this issue.

In 1994, the Secretary-General will assemble an intergovernmental group of experts to report on the operation of the Register and its development, taking account of the views of United Nations Member States and those of the Conference on Disarmament.

As a member of the United Nations family, the Conference on Disarmament has been requested to fulfil a unique task. It is up to the Conference on Disarmament to meet this concrete challenge. The process is in hand. Things have been set into motion. The credibility of the Conference on Disarmament will no doubt also be measured by the quality of its contribution to the process of bringing the United Nations Register to a head start.

In view of the above, it is the considered view of my delegation that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/36L, "Transparency in Armaments" should be inscribed as a separate item on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. In passing, I note that no counter-argument should be developed from the absence in the General Assembly resolution of a request pertaining to such an inscription. It is clear that the General Assembly did not wish to

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interfere with the autonomy of the Conference on Disarmament nor with the Conference's right to put its house in order in its own way. Neither is it appropriate, Mr. President, to bring this new and innovating item - Transparency in Armaments - under the aegis of the "Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament". Transparency cannot be put in a basket of various elements of miscellaneous quality. As a confidence- and security-building measure of global dimension, transparency stands up in its own right as a completely new building-block for arms control and disarmament in our era.

It is my sincere hope, Mr. President, that the Conference on Disarmament will not miss this window of opportunity, this unparalleled chance to develop the concept of transparency during the coming decade and thereby contribute to the enhancement of global security. Once Transparency in Armaments has been put on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, we can discuss ways and means for its appropriate handling.

In the view of my delegation an Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency in Armaments should be established in due course.

Mr. ERRERA (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, allow me first of all to associate myself with those colleagues who have congratulated you on your accession to the Presidency of the Conference. At this crucial time for our institution, everyone is aware how useful your authority and skills are in guiding our work forward. I also wish to pay a tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Arteaga, the representative of Venezuela, and to welcome our new colleagues from Belgium, Ambassador Servais, and from Mongolia, Ambassador Yumjav. I am most pleased, also, to see among us this morning Congressman Martin Lancaster, of the House of Representatives of the United States of America.

1. At the meeting of the Security Council held at the level of Heads of State and Government on 31 January last, the President of the French Republic announced France's decision to ratify Additional Protocol No. I to the Treaty of Tlatelolco making Latin America a nuclear-free zone. On the eve of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the signing of that Treaty, France wishes to salute the success of an instrument which constitutes an exemplary contribution to the prevention of nuclear proliferation. My country hopes that the decision to ratify the Treaty will encourage its full implementation and, in particular, the accession of those States in the region which are not yet parties to it. I should like to remind you that France had already acceded to Additional Protocol No. II, which provides for negative security guarantees in favour of the signatory States. It did so precisely because those States had entered into binding non-proliferation commitments. Such reciprocal commitments should, in our view, be a model for a worldwide solution to the problem of negative security assurances.

As to the implementation of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, France desires to express its deep satisfaction with respect to the set of measures taken by Argentina and by Brazil since the joint declaration on a common nuclear policy by their Presidents on 28 November 1991, as well as with the agreements recently presented in this forum by the representative of Brazil, Ambassador Amorim.

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France also welcomes the various initiatives taken by several Latin American countries to ban weapons of mass destruction from their region and to curtail the conventional-arms race. I am referring, in particular, to the resolution of the Organization of American States of 8 June 1991, initiative of Peru in favour of disarmament and security in Latin America, the Declaration of Mendoza and the Declaration of Cartagena on the renunciation of weapons of mass destruction by the countries of the Andean Group, described at the beginning of our session by the representative of Peru, Ambassador Rivero. France notes with satisfaction that the signatories of the Declarations of Mendoza and Cartagena have undertaken to become original signatories of the future convention prohibiting chemical weapons. It hopes that that example may be initiated by the States of other regions.

All of the initiatives I have just mentioned are constructive factors for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and for the strengthening of confidence and security in Latin America. They are consistent with the regional disarmament agreements, security arrangements and confidence-building measures called for in the French disarmament plan, whose validity is being demonstrated day after day. That is why, as the President of the French Republic stated in New York, France fully supports the proposal by the President of Egypt for a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and hopes that the peace process now under way will lead to the realization of that proposal.

That is also why France, like its European Community partners, has just welcomed the signing by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of the safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency, provided for by the Non-Proliferation Treaty; we expect the rapid ratification and full implementation of that agreement. Similarly, we welcome the bilateral agreement between the two Koreas and look forward to the implementation of the verification measures it envisages.

That is also why we support the proposal of Pakistan for a meeting on non-proliferation in south Asia.

Lastly, that is why we welcome the lifting of the last remaining obstacles to the transformation of the whole of Africa into a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

2. We believe that the progress achieved in the regional approach to security and non-proliferation questions necessarily goes hand in hand with increased efforts to combat proliferation worldwide.

Everyone recognizes that this is an imperative for the entire international community. As was vigorously underscored in the joint statement read out at the meeting of the Security Council on 31 January, "The proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction constitutes a threat to international peace and security".

France has always supported the aims and respected the disciplines of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. It took the political decision to give official form to that commitment by acceding to the Treaty, in order to demonstrate its

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determination. As the President of the Republic indicated in New York, the internal procedures approving accession are being completed. In the same spirit, France, whose policy was already stringent, has adopted the principle of application of IAEA full-scope safeguards as a condition of its nuclear exports. Lastly, we, along with our European Community partners at the last General Conference of IAEA, drew up a series of concrete proposals for strengthening the IAEA safeguards system.

What is true for the control of non-proliferation also holds good for the verification of disarmament. France's doctrine, borne out by recent experience, is constant: no disarmament without confidence, no confidence without control, no control other than international.

That constant concern led us to advocate a verification regime for the Convention on Bacteriological Weapons. In that regard, we shall be taking an active part in the work of the group of experts of the States Parties to the 1972 Convention, which is to meet beginning in March next.

That is why we attach so much importance to a credible verification system for the future convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons, one likely to deter potential violators and thereby reassure the vast majority of States which abide by their commitments. It is at that price, and only at that price, that the security of States will be guaranteed and hence the universality of the convention will be ensured. And it is that concern that will continue to guide the French delegation until the conclusion of this first world disarmament agreement, whose signature I would remind you, France, as a depository of the 1925 Geneva Protocol and through the voice of the President of the Republic, has proposed at Paris before the end of the year.

3. It is because the vital interests of all States, north and south, are at stake that we attach so much importance to the establishment of strict international controls of non-proliferation and credible multilateral verification of disarmament. This approach does not mean seeking to impose new constraints on developing countries; on the contrary, to our mind, it means responding to their security and development needs; it means contributing to the construction of a juster and safer world. No viable policy can be based on contentment with insufficient, inadequate control and verification regimes, inasmuch as of transfers of technology to the south would become increasingly limited. Such a makeshift solution could only run counter to the interests of the immense majority of the developing countries which, in abiding by the rules of non-proliferation, would find themselves doubly penalized: first, because they would be denied access to the technologies needed for their economic development, and, secondly, because their security would be threatened by those which refuse to enter into binding commitments or which violate the commitments they have entered into. Everything prompts us, on the contrary, to seek together a balance between the necessary strengthening of non-proliferation controls and greater cooperation in transfers of technology with those countries which honour their commitments.

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That is indeed the sense of the call addressed in the Cartagena Declaration "to the countries that possess technology for the production of weapons of mass destruction to strengthen in an effective manner systems to monitor the transfer of such technologies". That is also the sense of France's support for the efforts of countries which advocate multilateral dialogue on these issues. It is in this spirit that France, at the last session of the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, wanted to be included among the co-sponsors of the relevant draft resolution introduced by Argentina and Brazil. Lastly, that is why we unreservedly endorse the initiative of our Mexican colleague, Ambassador Marín Bosch in favour of an informal exchange of views on non-proliferation questions in our Conference.

4. Confidence is at the very centre of our disarmament efforts. It implies verification but also requires transparency. The five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council were convinced of this. The international community is now fully convinced of it, as demonstrated by the adoption - by an overwhelming majority - of a resolution on transparency in armaments at the last session of the United Nations General Assembly. As the Ambassador of the Netherlands has just so eloquently said, that resolution deals not only with conventional weapons, with weapons of mass destruction, but also with transfers of high technology having military applications. In that process the Conference on Disarmament has been assigned an important role, not only one of discussion, but also in the task of drawing up measures.

Here again it should be clear that all countries, north and south, suppliers or receivers, have an interest in seeing this issue, on which their security depends, dealt with seriously. In any case the Conference on Disarmament will be judged by the world at large, by the General Assembly of the United Nations, according to its capacity to achieve results and according to the quality of its work.

5. Given the current upheavals the world is experiencing, when the reduction of nuclear over-armament has already begun and the banning of chemical weapons is in the offing, the responsibility of the Conference on Disarmament, i.e. after all our own responsiblity, is great. As the United Nations Secretary-General stressed in his opening message, "The Conference on Disarmament should not only reflect the changing international landscape, but also be instrumental in transforming approaches to disarmament negotiations. It should do so by generating new ideas and new initiatives" (CD/PV.606, p. 8). You yourself said, Mr. President, in your opening statement that you were "deeply convinced of the new potential of this Conference as a main contributor to the new security order" (ibid., p. 6). We share that conviction.

It is clear that there is a growing interdependence between the various aspects of such security - prevention of proliferation, transfers of technology, verification of disarmament, confidence-building and transparency measures, and political settlement of conflicts - listed, of course, not in order of importance. Certainly, too, the regional approach to these questions

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cannot be dissociated from their treatment at the world level. And, finally, there can be no doubt that it is in a multilateral framework that progress can be made, broad consensuses be achieved and general rules agreed.

For all those reasons it seems to us that it is the natural role of the Conference on Disarmament, because it is representative, has a universal mission, to contribute to that process. The international context increases our responsibilities at the same time that it offers us new opportunities of openness and dialogue. There are strong new winds blowing. Let us know how to take their measure. But let us not be afraid to leave harbour. Let us not be timorous. For, between moving and standing still, it is not moving which is dangerous. It is standing still that may prove fatal and it is for us, for our Governments, to choose between the two options. So, it depends on our will alone whether we are capable of meeting the demands of our time.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of France for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Austria, Ambassador Lang.

Mr. LANG (Austria): Mr. President, allow me first to congratulate you on presiding over the Conference on Disarmament, which in 1992 should reach further substantial progress on the way to a more stable and human world. Though this path is full of obstacles and setbacks, there is no other way to go.

As a result of the far-reaching geopolitical changes of the last years, a bipolar world security system based on the mutual threat of two antagonistic military alliances has come to an end. Through this process, unique chances for an effective realization of the purposes and principles of the United Nations have re-emerged.

More than ever since World War II, a country's security is dependent upon its geographic situation. It is no longer an increase or decrease of tension between two ideological blocs that will determine a country's security, but the concrete political, economic and historical features of a region.

Since the growing interdependence of countries belonging to one and the same region has been recognized over recent years and even months, a new sense of regional solidarity has developed at the same time. As a matter of fact we are now more aware than ever that individual state-security depends first of all on the immediate geopolitical environment, but that this environment itself is conditioned by the broader interdependencies at the global level.

Thus, regional cooperation should always be exercised in a spirit of worldwide solidarity, since bare regional solidarity is not conducive to peace, but would lead to new global tensions detrimental to world stability as a whole. Thus, peace in all regions as well as national security would be put into jeopardy.

(Mr. Lang, Austria)

Solidarity, irrespective of whether it is regional or global, cannot exist without a minimum amount of confidence among nations. That is the reason why in our understanding confidence- and security-building measures are inseparable and constitute the very first step on the way to a peaceful world.

The adoption of the Charter of Paris in November 1990 has certainly been a landmark, in particular in the field of European security, though its worldwide repercussions can hardly be underestimated. The CFE and CSBM negotiations, which are both being held in Vienna, are designed to warrant a detailed implementation of that basic document. In this respect, Austria very much hopes that the CFE Ia negotiations on manpower limitation will come to a successful conclusion very soon and that, in the meantime, agreement will be reached on new substantial confidence- and security-building measures. Work is already under way to set the objectives and the scope of the new arms-control negotiations due to start among all CSCE participating States after this year's Helsinki Follow-up Meeting. Austria believes that these talks should lead to a more defensive posture of armed forces as well as to an enhanced transparency of both force generation and reconstitution. In this context, the already existing conceptual trend towards more defence-oriented force structures and smaller conventional military units, which manifested itself during the second CSCE-Seminar on Military Doctrines held recently in Vienna, is quite promising.

I should now like to turn briefly to more general considerations concerning the very nature of confidence among nations. Confidence itself is dependent on two factors, transparency and control - as has just been said by my distinguished colleague from France: transparency, because it leads to a better assessment of the other's intentions and therefore to the reduction of groundless fears; control, because it allows an early detection of measures taken in violation of existing security provisions established to enhance precisely the development of confidence.

It is out of these considerations of a more general kind that Austria warmly welcomes the recently adopted General Assembly resolution on "Transparency in Armament" submitted by the Netherlands on behalf of the European Community, because Austria supports the idea of an Arms Transfer Register to bring transparency into the arms trade and give warning of a peace-threatening arms build-up. I am referring to the statement of Ambassador Wagenmakers earlier this morning.

It is also out of these considerations that Austria, more than 20 years ago, became a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in which the States Parties gave expression of their wish to further the easing of international tension and the strengthening of trust between States as a means of reaching complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. At the last session of the Conference on Disarmament, Austria already had the opportunity to congratulate the French Government on its decision to join the Treaty. We now welcome a further decisive strengthening of this international instrument thanks to the accession since 1990 of Mozambique, Albania, Zambia, Tanzania, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Lithuania, and the announcements of China, Estonia, Latvia and Ukraine that they will follow suit.

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It goes without saying that my country would warmly welcome any further increase in the number of Parties to the Treaty. In this context, Austria also gives expression to her hope that the "Joint Declaration for a Non-nuclear Korean Peninsula" signed at the very end of 1991 will lead to further adherence to the NPT.

It is also with sincere satisfaction that Austria was able to witness the signature in Vienna of a safeguards agreement between Argentina, Brazil, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

We also continue to attach considerable importance to a comprehensive nuclear test-ban and are of the opinion that a comprehensive verification system should be indispensable. That is why Austria has participated for more than 12 years in the work of the Ad Hoc Group of Seismic Experts whose task is to develop a feasible verification system for a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. In particular, a joint Austrian-Peruvian project has been designed to widen the technical part of the envisaged global seismological network to Latin America, a project that we still sponsor.

As to the Convention on Biological and Toxin Weapons and more particularly to the Third Review Conference held in September last, Austria regrets the failure of reiterated attempts to establish an efficient intersessional mechanism. In my personal perspective as the President of the 1986 Review Conference, some substantive progress towards more institutionalization would have been advisable in order to strengthen the credibility of the Convention. In our view, this intersessional mechanism would have permitted an objective survey of the performances of States Parties with regard to their confidence-building measures. On the other hand, the fact that an agreement on a new set of confidence-building measures, in particular concerning the pharmaceutical industry and import-export control, could be entered into, gives us some ground for satisfaction. We do hope that the meeting of the Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts, due to convene this year on 30 March, will further the preparedness for verifying compliance. Since Ambassador Toth, of Hungary, will chair this group, we are convinced that his skills and in-depth knowledge of the subject will be a core element for fruitful debates.

Furthermore, it is with great satisfaction that we have noted that Argentina, Brazil and Chile undertook on 5 September 1991 in Mendoza not to use, develop, produce, otherwise acquire, transfer, stockpile or retain biological or chemical weapons - as a direct consequence of the existing Convention on Biological and Toxin Weapons as well as of the current negotiations on chemical weapons.

All of us are expecting the conclusion of the Convention on Chemical Weapons in 1992. Nevertheless, serious obstacles have still to be overcome, especially in the field of verification. As far as challenge inspections are concerned, Austria is of the opinion that the warning time for the inspected States Parties ought to be kept as short as possible. In this context, the Swiss experience of an experimental challenge inspection - as described in

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document CD/CW/WP.372 - clearly demonstrates that challenge procedures should be kept simple in order to avoid undesirable delays during the inspection. The reason for "streamlining" them seems evident to us: by no means should a violator be allowed time that would help him to destroy or hide evidence of non-compliance. If this could not be guaranteed, the whole proceeding would then become highly detrimental to the aims and purposes of the Convention.

Certainly, abuses during inspection cannot be excluded, at least theoretically, from the very outset but we would like very much to point out that the issue of abuses is not at all specific to inspections in the field of chemical weapons. The possibility of abuse is inherent in all legal regimes - whether the regime of individual property law, company law, State constitutions or international organizations. We are very well aware that within the scope of the Convention on Chemical Weapons the abuses could be both of a political as well as of a more technical nature if we think of the possibility of industrial or military espionage. It goes therefore without saying that the possibility of abuse should be minimized, but fears about abuses should not lead to a verification regime that is not conducive to the effective deterrence of any prospective violator.

For very similar reasons, Austria takes a sceptical stance with regard to widening the scope of Article VI of the Convention. The future Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons will necessarily dispose of a limited budget, even if it is generously funded. Hence, the Organization ought to concentrate its verification activities on more acute cases of alleged non-compliance. A perfect system of total control of all capable facilities would inevitably put a strain on the staff and its means which it would not be able to handle both from a quantitative and a qualitative point of view. If this were the case, the credibility of such a system would decrease even below a threshold of dissuasion.

Mr. President, please allow me at this stage to express a grateful word of thanks to Ambassador Brotodiningrat for having carried out consultations on the issue of "Old Chemical Weapons" and having subsequently produced an excellent paper, dated 20 December 1991, reflecting the various opinions on this subject. The Austrian view on this topic starts from the perception that in many cases it could be tackled as an environmental issue where particular care should be devoted to the serious hazards these so-called weapons are very likely to pose to men and nature. In this respect, the efforts of this Conference should only consider the issue of old and abandoned chemical weapons in so far as they constitute a threat to national and international security interests. We fear, however, that more detailed stipulations would pose insurmountable difficulties, given the very different historical reasons for which old and abandoned chemical weapons are to be found nowadays and given the different provisions in various peace treaties with regard to war material which has been left behind.

Austria, being a member of the Security Council since the beginning of 1991, knows very well in this context that the provisions of last year's Security Council resolution 687 on a permanent cease-fire in the Iraq-Kuwait conflict are not directly comparable to the necessities of a future Convention

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on Chemical Weapons. However, the application of that resolution taught the inspectors involved highly valuable lessons. Drawing on their experience, we think that the right of the on-site United Nations inspectors to go anywhere, anytime, in Iraq was absolutely necessary, in particular because of Iraq's attempts to cover up in the nuclear area. The obstacles that emerged from various factors, for instance during the efforts to discover all Iraqi SCUD missiles, underline the vital need for a strong verification regime in the framework of the future Convention on Chemical Weapons. This proves to us again that the unbroken efficiency of challenge inspection is, in our view, the centre-piece of a dissuasive verification regime. As we have been talking of Iraq's behaviour during inspections commissioned by the United Nations, it ought also to be mentioned that Iraq eventually took a more cooperative stance with regard to chemical weapons and the relevant inspections.

During the Gulf War an aspect of warfare has received unprecedented attention, namely the environmental damage caused by deliberate acts of manipulation and destruction. This attention was rightly prompted by the horrifying scenes reproduced by the media showing how shamelessly the environment can be exploited as a weapon. These events have demonstrated that the existing provisions relating to environmental protection in armed conflicts are not sufficient to deal with aspects of environmental destruction of such magnitude as the setting afire of the oilwells in Kuwait and the deliberate spills of crude oil into the Gulf. My delegation believes - and this has already been pointed out by Austria in the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly - that the Members of the United Nations ought to study seriously and objectively all the issues involved and, when the time comes, to take appropriate action in order to arrive at an effective regime for the protection of the environment in times of armed conflict.

At this stage please let me thank the various authors of the recently published UNIDIR study on "Disarmament, Environment and Development and their Relevance to the Least Developed Countries" for their contribution to this debate.

Mr. President, especially because of its traumatic experience during two World Wars, Austria is very much bound to the first purpose of the United Nations - to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Austria's efforts as a Member of this Organization never dissociate themselves from the concept of worldwide disarmament. Consequently, Austria has always offered her good services in this respect. On a European level, we have already hosted negotiations on Conventional Forces in Europe and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe including its Centre for Conflict Prevention. Within the United Nations disarmament framework, the International Atomic Energy Agency, which administers the NPT-safeguards regime, has its headquarters in Vienna.

As long as two years ago, we had the privilege to present Austria's invitation to host the future Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in Vienna. This proposal is to be seen as a consistent continuation of Austria's readiness to substantially contribute to the work of international organizations and to international peace. An optimal working environment for

(Mr. Lang, Austria)

the new organization and its staff members will enhance their performance and thus contribute to effective compliance procedures necesary for a successful disarmament regime in the field of chemical weapons.

My delegation appreciates that two prominent diplomats, well known for their skill and spirit of innovation, Ambassador Ritter von Wagner and Ambassador Kamal, are in charge of facilitating a decision on the site and the headquarters of the new organization. We certainly stand ready to participate in consultations on this issue and will submit our replies to the future questionnaire in due course.

Since, however, the best and most convincing documentation can be no substitute for a personal impression, we would like to offer to you the possibility of making up your mind by visiting Vienna and examining yourself our proposal for the provisional and permanent headquarters of the future Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons as well as the infrastructure of the candidate city. I have therefore the honour to repeat a recent informal statement by Ambassador Klestil, Secretary-General of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and to invite all delegations which are members of the Conference on Disarmament to a two-day excursion to Vienna as guests of the Republic of Austria and the City of Vienna, at a date convenient to this Conference. We extend this invitation to the heads of each delegation accompanied by a person of their choice. I am confident that the information there at your disposal will facilitate an objective decision about the future host-country of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Let me assure you that we would be proud and honoured if it were Austria.

I wish to conclude my statement by paying a tribute to the Government of the Netherlands, which is organizing later this year a seminar on the practical aspects of the implementation of the chemical weapons convention. We hope that insights gained during this seminar will enable the contracting parties to the convention to assure an early and efficient "take-off" of the convention.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Austria for his statement. That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other representative wish to take the floor at this stage? I see none.

With your permission, we shall now proceed with action on those organizational questions which I mentioned at the opening of this plenary meeting. I put before the Conference, for adoption, the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, contained in document CD/1116. If there is no objection, I shall consider that the Conference adopts it.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I should now like to proceed to agenda items 2, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", and 3, entitled "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters". In this connection, I shall follow a procedure identical to that used last year to formalize the consensus achieved during presidential consultations. I therefore put before the Conference for decision the following text:

(The President)

"The Conference on Disarmament decides that informal meetings be held during its 1992 session on the substance of agenda items 2, 'Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament', and 3, 'Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters', and that the discussions at those informal meetings be duly reflected in the annual report of the Conference to the General Assembly of the United Nations."

If there is no objection, I shall consider that the Conference adopts the text that I have just read out.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I should now like to turn to another subject relating to the forthcoming informal meetings. Under the rules of procedure, the President of the Conference has the responsibility, in accordance with the normal duties of any presiding officer, to ensure that discussions at plenary or informal meetings are conducted in an orderly way. Accordingly, I wish to inform you that I have myself taken the initiative of preparing a list of topics for the purpose of facilitating a structured discussion at informal meetings on the substance of agenda items 2 and 3. That list is my own and therefore does not bind any delegation. Furthermore, it is understood that members wishing to do so may raise any subject relevant to the agenda items, as is the normal practice of the Conference. I shall now read out that list of topics:

Firstly, for agenda item 2:

"Implementation of paragraph 50 of the Final Document of SSOD-I in the light of the trends in international relations

Evaluation of the dynamics of the nuclear arms race in the light of recent international developments

Halting and reversing the qualitative aspects of the nuclear arms race, and related matters

Existing international instruments concerning the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament: the need for a global, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory non-proliferation régime in order to achieve the goal of complete nuclear disarmament

The interrelation between bilateral and multilateral consideration of the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament; participation in negotiations for the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament; the need for the participation of all nuclear-weapon States in nuclear disarmament; role of the Conference on Disarmament

Security concepts relating to nuclear weapons in view of recent developments and in the light of the global consequences of existing and envisaged disarmament and arms limitation agreements

(The President)

The role of nuclear deterrence in keeping the peace for 40 years: the need to proceed carefully and gradually in reducing reliance on nuclear deterrence

The relevance of doctrines of nuclear deterrence in the present-day context

Principles governing nuclear disarmament

Proposals on stages and measures of nuclear disarmament

Cessation of the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes, and measures against the reuse for weapons purposes of fissionable material released by disarmament steps

Naval nuclear armaments and disarmament

A zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East

Collateral measures with the aim of consolidating and continuing the ongoing process of nuclear disarmament:

Measures to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons technology, to deter efforts of threshold and emerging nuclear States to acquire nuclear weapons

Non-proliferation of missiles and other means of delivery of nuclear weapons, as well as their technology

Confidence-building measures promoting nuclear disarmament

Regional aspects of security: how to prevent competition for nuclear arms or other weapons of mass destruction

A global and multilateral verification agency under United Nations auspices

Verification in relation to the purposes, scope and nature of agreements

Existing proposals."

Secondly, for agenda item 3:

"The impossibility of separating the problems of preventing nuclear war and preventing any war

Measures to exclude the use of nuclear weapons, inter alia:

Paragraph 58 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly (code of peaceful conduct that would preclude the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons)

(The President)

International convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances (text annexed to General Assembly resolution 43/76 E of 7 December 1988)

Prohibition in a legally binding form of the use of nuclear weapons

Measures for confidence-building and crisis prevention:

Measures to enhance confidence and increase openness with regard to military activities, including a multilateral agreement on the prevention of incidents on the high seas

Measures to prevent accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons and to avoid and manage crisis situations, including the establishment of multilateral nuclear alert and crisis control centres

Measures to facilitate international verification of compliance with arms limitation and disarmament agreements

Criteria and parameters for defensive military postures; military strategies and doctrines; prevention of surprise attacks

New trends in weapons technology and their impact on security and disarmament efforts

Measures to foster regional agreements preventing the acquisition, use or transfer of nuclear weapons material and technologies to other States

Measures that the international community can take to discourage States from developing and implementing nuclear weapons programmes."

That is the list of topics that I have prepared on my own responsibility. The informal meetings on agenda items 2 and 3 will be held consecutively and my successor will inform you of the arrangements for holding them, well in advance, so that we might fully use the time available for them. Following the practice of the Conference, if, for any reason at any particular meeting, we have insufficient time to listen to all the speakers listed, we shall resume listening to them at the following informal meeting.

Distinguished representatives, at this point I would like to inform you that the representative of India has asked for the floor to make a statement on the decision taken by the Conference on agenda item 2. I give the floor to the representative of India, Ambassador Shah.

Mr. SHAH (India): I have asked for the floor to make a statement on behalf of the following 19 delegations of the Group of 21: Algeria, Brazil, Cuba, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Mexico, Myanmar, Mongolia, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire and, of course, India.

(Mr. Shah, India)

We would like to place on record our wish that the Conference on Disarmament establish an ad hoc committee at the beginning of its 1992 session on the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament with an adequate mandate, in order to allow a structured and practical analysis of how the Conference could best contribute to progress on this urgent matter. Resolution 46/37 C, adopted at the forty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly, has called upon all nuclear-weapon States to agree, through a joint declaration, to a comprehensive nuclear-arms freeze, which would embrace, besides a comprehensive test-ban on nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles, the complete cessation of the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes under appropriate and effective measures and procedures for verification. We regret that, despite the preliminary work carried out on the subject during previous years, and repeated General Assembly resolutions on this issue, it has still not been found possible to set up an ad hoc committee on this item.

We are convinced that the need for urgent multilateral action on the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament, leading to the adoption of concrete measures, has been amply demonstrated especially in the present-day international climate. In our opinion, multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament have long been overdue. We take note of the progress achieved in the bilateral negotiations in the nuclear field and look forward to further reductions in strategic nuclear arsenals in the context of the START process and recent unilateral measures announced by the United States and the Russian Federation. However, bilateral negotiations cannot replace or bypass the genuine multilateral search for universally applicable nuclear disarmament measures. All nations have a vital interest in negotiations on nuclear disarmament. The existence of nuclear weapons and their quantitative and qualitative development directly and fundamentally jeopardize the vital security interests of both nuclear and non-nuclear weapon States alike. It is an accepted fact that nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to mankind and to the survival of civilization. The present international situation and the end of the cold war lend further credence to the long-standing demand of an overwhelming majority of the world community to take further urgent measures for the elimination of nuclear weapons. It has now been amply realized that the accumulation of nuclear weaponry constitutes a threat to the very security that it seeks to protect. In the nuclear age, the only valid doctrine is the doctrine of collective security. Since the irrelevance of the doctrine of nuclear deterrence has been amply demonstrated, the nuclear arms race, which had led to greater insecurity and instability in international relations, can now be reversed quickly. Moreover, such doctrines, which in the ultimate analysis are predicated upon a willingness to use nuclear weapons, cannot be the basis for preventing the outbreak of nuclear war, which is now a real danger due to possible loss of control over existing arsenals. A nuclear war would affect participants and innocent bystanders alike. We reiterate the validity of General Assembly resolution 1653 (XVI), of 1961, which declared, inter alia, that the use of nuclear weapons would be contrary to the laws of humanity and a crime against civilization. We consider that in the task of achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament, the nuclear-weapon States bear a special responsibility. All nuclear-weapon States should now accept the

(Mr. Shah, India)

obligation to take positive and practical steps in a time-bound manner towards the adoption and implementation of concrete measures towards nuclear disarmament.

Paragraph 50 of the Final document of SSOD-1 sets out guidelines for the Conference on Disarmament to provide an effective and complementary process in the multilateral framework. We remain firmly committed to the implementation of the provisions of that paragraph.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of India for his statement and now I give the floor to the representative of Kenya, who wishes to speak on the decision that we have taken on agenda item 3.

Mr. KOIKAI (Kenya): Mr. President, as this is the first time that the Kenyan delegation is speaking during your presidency, allow me to express the gratitude of the Kenyan delegation for the manner in which you have guided the work of the Conference in the first and difficult month of its 1992 session. Our gratitude also goes to Ambassador Arteaga, your predecessor, for the very effective manner in which he presided over the Conference.

Mr. President, I have asked for the floor to make a statement on behalf of the following 19 delegations: Algeria, Brazil, Cuba, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire and my own delegation. The statement is as follows.

The delegations, while joining the consensus decision to discuss agenda item 3 in informal plenary meetings, wish to express their regret at the inability of the Conference on Disarmament to set up an ad hoc committee on this agenda item. They have continuously shown themselves ready to exchange views on this subject, here or in the General Assembly.

I do not need to emphasize the importance that we attach to this item. We believe that as long as nuclear weapons continue to exist in the arsenals of some States the greatest peril facing the world is the threat of destruction from a nuclear war, and that consequently the removal of this threat is most acute and urgent. Nuclear-weapon States continue to bear the primary responsibility for avoiding nuclear war, but all nations have a vital interest in the negotiation of measures for prevention of nuclear war, in view of the catastrophic consequences that such a war would have for mankind. As far back as 1961, General Assembly resolution 1653 (XVI) declared that the use of nuclear weapons, besides being a violation of the Charter of the United Nations, would be against the laws of humanity and a crime against civilization. Furthermore, the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries, in their various summits, have always emphasized the extreme urgency of achieving nuclear disarmament through the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and have stressed the need for the conclusion of an international agreement prohibiting all use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

(Mr. Koikai, Kenya)

It should be a matter of concern for all delegations present in this Conference that no prgress has been made on this item since its introduction as a separate item on the Conference's agenda in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/183 G. However, it has to be recognized that the nuclear arms race has experienced a downturn following the end of the cold war. It is therefore imperative for the nuclear-weapon States to undertake effective unilateral or collective measures that would lead to the reduction and eventual elimination of the instruments with which to conduct nuclear war. Additionally, the nuclear-weapon States should halt the modernization and expansion of their arsenals, as the motivation to do so has been virtually eliminated as a result of the international political changes.

The United Nations General Assembly has repeatedly requested the Conference on Disarmament to commence, as a matter of the highest priority, negotiations with a view to achieving agreement on appropriate and practical measures for the prevention of nuclear war and to establish for that purpose an ad hoc committee on this subject. During its 1991 session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/37 D entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons", in which it reiterated the call to the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations, as a matter of priority, in order to reach agreement on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances, taking as a basis for its work the draft convention annexed to that resolution.

In view of the irreversible consequence of nuclear war, it is clear that conventional wars cannot under any circumstances be equated with nuclear war, since nuclear weapons are weapons of mass destruction. In this context, invoking the Charter of the United Nations to justify the use of nuclear weapons in the exercise of the right to self-defence is completely unjustifiable. These delegations still remain convinced, despite the end of the cold war, that the shortest way to remove the danger of nuclear war lies in the elimination of nuclear weapons and that, pending the achievement of nuclear disarmament, the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons should be prohibited.

We remain committed to the position expressed in CD/515/Rev.5, of 27 July 1989, for the establishment of an ad hoc committee that would permit thorough consideration of all aspects - legal, political, technical and military - of all the proposals before the Conference. We believe that such consideration will not only contribute to better understanding of the subject but also pave the way for negotiations for an agreement on the prevention of nuclear war. Such an objective cannot be achieved only through discussions in the plenary or in informal meetings. These delegations are disappointed, therefore, that despite the urgency accorded to this subject and the flexibility they have displayed, the Conference on Disarmament is not able to discharge its own mandate, which is reflected in paragraph 120 of the Final Document of SSOD-1. However, we hope that the importance of the matter will lead to a rethinking on the part of those delegations who have expressed reservations on this mandate. We have taken note of the non-binding list of topics to be discussed under agenda item 3 that you have prepared as President

(Mr. Koikai, Kenya)

of the Conference, and in addressing these issues we will also respond to your invitation that delegations may raise any other subject relevant to agenda item 3. That concludes my statement.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Kenya for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair.

I now wish to turn to another subject. The secretariat has circulated today working document CD/WP.421, containing a request from Malta to participate in the work of the Conference. At the presidential consultation yesterday, we agreed to dispense with the requirement of considering it at an informal meeting, as the request was generally accepted. May I now invite you to take action on document CD/WP.421. I see no objection to acceptance of Malta's request.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I shall inform the delegation of Malta accordingly.

I have requested the secretariat to circulate working document CD/WP.422, containing a draft mandate for an Ad Hoc Committee under item 5 of the agenda, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". May I propose that we take a decision on that document. If there is no objection, I shall consider that the Conference adopts it. I see none.

It was so decided.

Mr. KAREM (Egypt): Mr. President, since this is the first time the delegation of Egypt is taking the floor under your able presidency, we wish to congratulate you and assure you that formal congratulations, of course, will come in a statement made by the head of this delegation once he returns.

The delegation of Egypt considers that the decision just taken is important because of the cardinal issue of the topic under consideration, namely the prevention of an arms race in outer space. It is a matter of priority and importance not only to the delegation of Egypt but also to many others. Naturally, the Ad Hoc Committee established, under the aegis of the Conference, since the inscription of this item on our agenda in 1985, has annually received attention, although its mandate never achieved the hoped-for consensus despite the cardinal importance devoted to this topic. The delegation of Egypt fully understands the realities of this situation and its complex dimensions. But it is because of the sui generis nature of the item under consideration that the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee has traditionally been tabled first and then later adopted in a subsequent formal meeting of the Conference on Disarmament, or that the intention would be announced of putting the draft mandate for adoption at a subsequent session of the CD, thereby allowing sufficient time for delegations. However, and since the agreement this year has been different, the delegation of Egypt will not therefore, as demonstrated a few minutes ago, block the consensus reached. Our views, though, on the substance of the item under consideration will be made at a later stage.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair and I am sure the Conference is looking forward to the statement which will be made in the next plenary or in any other meeting. In connection with the decision we have just taken, I wish to inform you that consultations are continuing on the programme of work for the Ad Hoc Committee.

As you know, the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons approved yesterday a communication addressed to all States, members and non-members of the Conference, concerning the seat for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Under rule 11 of the rules of procedure, the President shall represent the Conference in its relations with States, in full consultation with the Conference and under its authority. If there is no objection, I shall proceed to send that communication, as drafted. I see no objection.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with the decision taken by the Conference at its 575th plenary meeting on 21 August 1990, the President shall identify a special coordinator in case of an absence of consensus on the establishment of any particular subsidiary body or its mandate. The special coordinator should assist in carrying out informal consultations with a view to reaching consensus. Of course, such an appointment does not prejudge any decisions that the Conference might take later in connection with any pending questions.

While consultations have advanced, we still need to agree on an appropriate organizational arrangement for agenda item 1, "Nuclear test ban", and agenda item 8, "Comprehensive programme of disarmament". It is now my duty to identify a special coordinator for each of those agenda items.

Accordingly, I have decided to appoint as special coordinator for agenda item 1 the former Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Shah of India. For agenda item 8, the special coordinator will be Ambassador Zahran of Egypt. They are not here with us at this moment but I wish them success in their endeavours to obtain consensus on those items.

Distinguished representatives, at this point, with your permission, I would like to make my concluding statement.

We began this year's session in a significantly changed international environment, with a more optimistic note since dialogue and partnership are replacing mistrust and confrontation. We are becoming aware of the fact that this body can gain more importance in the creation of a new security balance by way of concrete negotiations and agreements on arms control and disarmament measures.

I believe that my distinguished colleagues share the satisfaction that we have achieved concrete results as regards some important organizational questions. At the very beginning of our work, we were able to set up the

(The President)

Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons and we elected the Ambassador of Germany, H.E. Mr. von Wagner, as its Chairman. That achievement is in full conformity with the assessment that it will be exceptionally important that this year we wind up our work on the Convention on the total prohibition of chemical weapons successfully. Through that we have sent a good message to our Governments and to public opinion, that we are serious and dedicated to the conclusion of this Convention on time.

We were successful in reaching agreement on the establishment of three other subsidiary bodies - Ad Hoc Committees - on Radiological Weapons; on Effective International Arrangements to Assure Non-Nuclear Weapon States against the Use or Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons; and on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. We were very close to an agreement on the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on the Nuclear Test Ban, and I do hope that we will be able to start substantive work on this extremely important item as soon as our distinguished colleague, Ambassador Shah of India, in his capacity as Special Coordinator for this item, concludes his consultations on the pending issue of the mandate.

We have also been able to reach an early agreement on an appropriate organizational framework to deal with agenda items 2 and 3, and I hope that this framework will facilitate a productive exchange on the list of issues involved.

I am very pleased, as well, that my dear colleague, Ambassador Zahran of Egypt, has accepted the designation of Special Coordinator for item 8 of our agenda, that is to say on the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament.

We have also reached agreement on the participation of non-members in the work of our Conference. With today's acceptance of Malta we have reached the record number of 40 countries taking part in the work of our Conference, in their capacity as observers. I am certain that we all share the sentiment of satisfaction as regards the growing awareness and interest in the substantive work of our Conference. This is ample proof of the importance of the genuine process of multilateral consensus-building and of the fact that this Conference is becoming an equal partner in the construction of a new security environment in the world.

There is also another proof for that conviction. I would like to point out the importance of the message to the Conference by the new Secretary-General of the United Nations, H.E. Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. It gave us strength to foster this body as an independent partner but also as a vital part of the United Nations system that should grow into a fundamental instrument in the creation of new security structures.

The important message of the President of the Russian Federation, H.E. Mr. Boris Yeltsin, and the statement of his Foreign Minister, H.E. Mr. Kozyrev, who addressed our Conference yesterday, underline the necessity of keeping the Conference on Disarmament informed on any major developments and positions which can influence our work. In the same manner,

(The President)

I welcome the statement of the Ambassador of Brazil, H.E. Mr. Amorim, who informed this Conference on important bilateral agreements between his country and Argentina on some nuclear issues.

I cannot miss this opportunity and fail to address the issue of transparency in armaments, to which we have devoted negotiating efforts in order to find the most suitable ways and means for the Conference to address this new and challenging issue. I consider that two rounds of consultations proved useful in providing us with a clear picture of the situation. It is evident that more consultations will be needed in order to amalgamate the agreement. This responsibility will fall on my successor but I am convinced that we all will be in a position to help him in order to achieve adequate results on this pending issue.

Ambassador Kamal of Pakistan will accordingly conduct consultations with members of the Conference to determine common ground for addressing certain issues on improved and effective functioning of the Conference. I am certain that Ambassador Kamal, with his usual vigour and well-known diplomatic skills, will continue his consultations with a view to building upon the area of agreement reached last year.

In conclusion, I would like to express my deep appreciation to the group coordinators and to all delegations, which have always extended to me their fullest cooperation and understanding. A special word of gratitude should go to Ambassador Komatina, Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, and to Ambassador Berasetagui, the Deputy Secretary-General, who have always provided valuable advice with high professionalism and extreme skill. I would like to thank the other members of the secretariat as well who have helped me and my delegation in carrying out our responsibilities during the past four weeks. I would also like to convey my thanks to the interpreters for the efficient job they always perform. I would like to convey my best wishes to the incoming President as well, to the Ambassador of Zaire, H.E. Mr. Mutuale Kikanke. We are already familiar with his outstanding competence and are confident of a successful stewardship of the Conference under his presidency.

That concludes my statement.

I have no other business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 20 February, at 10 a.m.

The plenary meeting stands adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.